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UNCLAS BOGOTA 011422

SIPDIS

WHA FOR MIELE

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: REP BALLENGER RECEIVES ORDER OF SAN CARLOS MEDAL
FROM GOC

1. On October 27, President Uribe presented Representative Cass Ballenger with the Order of San Carlos medal and thanked him for his long-standing support. On the margins of the ceremony, Ballenger told Uribe about his trip to the USAID alternative development projects in Putumayo Department and praised Uribe for his progress in two years. Ballenger suggested that the GOC consider working with USAID to construct a road to connect the Putumayo lumber producers with customers. He pledged to remain engaged in the international coffee cooperation and other Colombian issues after his retirement from the Congress.

2 (U) Begin unofficial translation of the GOC award:

Decree 2582 of August 12, 2004

Which confers the Medal of the "Order of San Carlos"

The President of the Republic of Colombia

By the authority invested upon him and particularly that conferred by decrees 2397 of 1954, 3363 of 1980 and 1220 of 2001 and

Whereas:

The Government of Colombia has instituted the Order of St. Carlos to honor and extol Colombian and foreign nationals who have distinguished themselves for their outstanding services to the country, especially in the field of international relations.

The Honorable Congressman Cass Ballenger (R-NC), member of the Foreign Relations Committee, is visiting our country as a token of his continuous interest for the social and political well-being of our country.

During the exercise of his legislative duties, the Honorable Representative Cass Ballenger has given tangible proof of support to the initiatives of the Government of Colombia in his quest for the country's highest interests, through key cooperation programs developed within the framework of Plan Colombia, aimed at securing the safety of all Colombians, the promotion of human rights and social investment;

As a Congressman, the Honorable Cass Ballenger has taken up the defense of democratic values, which foundations lay on the respect for the state of law and the strengthening of institutions and political stability. These foundations are shared by the Government of Colombia in application of the policy of democratic security.

The Honorable Cass Ballenger has crystallized his solidarity with the country in critical events such as the earthquakes, which hit the coffee region in 1999, and has supported important social programs) such as PLANTE) which promote the development of alternative crops in conflict areas.

The Government of Colombia wishes to grant recognition and exalt the virtues of the Honorable Congressman Cass Ballenger:

Decrees:

Article one: That the Medal of San Carlos, in the grade of the Great Cross, is conferred to the Honorable Cass Ballenger, Congressman of the United States of America.

Article two: This decree becomes effective as of the date of issue.

Given at Bogota, on August 12, 2004

/s/

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carolina Barco

End text.

13. (U) Comment: The decree was dated August 12 because it was drafted and approved for an earlier Ballenger visit postponed for health reasons. End comment.

DRUCKER